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**Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman Announces
Marine Life Protection Act Initiative's South Coast Study Region
Blue Ribbon Task Force**

*Former League of California Cities Executive Director Don Benninghoven Named as Chair, New Members
Jane Pisano and Gregory Schem Join South Coast Task Force*

SACRAMENTO - Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman today named Don Benninghoven chairman for the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative's South Coast Study Region Blue Ribbon Task Force. Secretary Chrisman also named new members Dr. Jane Pisano and Mr. Greg Schem to the task force responsible for making recommendations to implement the MLPA in the South Coast Study Region.

"I'm confident that this group will bring a diverse range of knowledge necessary to ensure that our progress continues," said Chrisman. "Over the next few months, the task force will have the opportunity to work with scientists, fishermen, elected officials and conservationists, so that together we may better protect our ocean and marine life for generations to come."

The seven-member panel will meet on Sept. 8 in San Diego and will make its recommendations late next year to the California Fish and Game Commission for improving the state's system of marine protected areas through scientific analysis and expanded public input.

Don Benninghoven is the former executive director of the League of California Cities and the City-County-School Partnership. During his 40-year tenure at the League, Benninghoven was intimately involved in every facet of municipal operations, financing and policy. He has served on various boards and commissions in the administrations of Governors Deukmejian, Wilson and Davis.

Dr. Jane Pisano, president and director of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County since November 2001, is returning to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force after having served on the task force for the central coast, the first region evaluated in the MLPA Initiative process.

Gregory F. Schem is president and chief executive officer of Harbor Real Estate Group, specializing in marina and waterfront real estate investments, including a marina, fuel dock and boat yard in Marina del Rey. Schem has had a successful career in the national real estate market as an investor, developer and manager.

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Secretary Chrisman has charged the task force with three specific goals:

- Oversee a regional project to develop alternative marine protected area proposals along California's MLPA South Coast Study Region to present to the California Fish and Game Commission.
- Prepare information and recommendations for coordinating management of marine protected areas with federal agencies, and
- Provide direction for expenditure of initiative funds.

The first phase of the MLPA Initiative focused on the central coast of California (Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County), while the second phase focused on the north central coast (Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point). On Sept. 21, 2007, central coast marine protected areas (MPAs) were implemented, the first of five study regions that will be implemented through MLPA by 2011.

Data collection in the MLPA South Coast Study Region, that extends from Point Conception (Santa Barbara County) to the California-Mexico border (San Diego County), including offshore islands, began earlier this year. Public workshops and open houses were held this summer to introduce the MLPA Initiative to the public.

The MLPA Initiative is dependent upon the active involvement of stakeholders and the general public to succeed. Various opportunities are available for such involvement, including a statewide interests group, a regional stakeholder group and meetings of the task force and science advisory team that are open to the public. Meetings of the regional stakeholder group are also open to the public and all public meetings are simultaneously Webcast and archived for later viewing.

The MLPA South Coast Study Region Blue Ribbon Task Force members:

- William W. Anderson, President of Westrec Marina Management, Inc.
- Don Benninghoven, former executive director of the League of California Cities
- Meg Caldwell, Director and Senior Lecturer on Law, Stanford Law School's Environment and Natural Resources Law & Policy Program
- Susan Golding, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Golding Group and Former Mayor of San Diego
- Dr. Jane Pisano, president and director of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
- Catherine Reheis-Boyd, Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff for the Western States Petroleum Association
- Gregory F. Schem, President and Chief Executive Officer of Harbor Real Estate Group

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About the MLPA:

California's system of MPAs is being reexamined and redesigned through the MLPA through a comprehensive program and master plan. Its primary goals are to increase the effectiveness of these areas to protect marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems. Marine protected areas include state marine conservation areas, state marine parks and state marine reserves. These are defined on the Web site <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

About the MLPA Initiative:

To achieve the goals of the MLPA, the California Resources Agency and California Department of Fish and Game partnered with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation to establish the MLPA Initiative. This public-private partnership is designed to help the state implement and achieve the goals of the MLPA, guided by the advice of scientists, resource managers, experts, stakeholders and members of the public. A memorandum of understanding, recently amended for the south coast study region, outlines the initiative process.

For more information about the task force members, MLPA meetings, or the MLPA Initiative, visit the MLPA Web site at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.